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PAGE 02 STATE 134333

NADA/ASSESSMENT/JUNE 02/MFA WASHINGTON

POLITICAL ANALYSIS: SOVIET MILITARY LEADERS TAKE A  
TOUGHER LINE IN V-E DAY ARTICLES--WITH SOME EXCEPTIONS

1. USSR DEFENSE MINISTER AND POLITBURO MEMBER USTINOV'S  
PRAVDA ARTICLE FOR V-E DAY (MAY 9) WAS HARSHER IN TONE

THAN THE ONE HE WROTE FOR THE PARTY DAILY IN CONNECTION WITH SOVIET ARMY DAY (FEBRUARY 23) THIS YEAR. IT WAS

INDEED HARSHER THAN ALL OTHER SUCH V-E DAY ARTICLES SINCE THE ADVENT OF DETENTE IN 1972. USTINOV'S LATEST ARTICLE WAS STERNER ABOUT THE DANGER OF WAR, PLAYED DOWN THE THEME OF DETENTE, AND DIRECTLY CRITICIZED THE UNITED STATES. CHIEF OF STAFF OGARKOV IN IZVESTIYA ON V-E DAY WAS EVEN MORE CRITICAL OF WASHINGTON, BUT LESS WEIGHTY DEFENSE PERSONALITIES TROD MORE SOFTLY ON DELICATE THEMES. USTINOV AND OGARKOV SEEM TO HAVE BEEN EXPRESSING A HIGH COMMAND IF NOT KREMLIN INTENTION TO MAINTAIN THE SOVIETS' HARD BARGAINING STANCE AT SALT II, WHILE SOME OF THE OTHERS COULD BE REFLECTING A MORE CONCILIATORY VIEWPOINT.

## 2. WAR DANGER

3. USUALLY, THE THREAT OF WAR IS RAISED AS AN EXCUSE TO BOLSTER SOVIET MILITARY POTENTIAL AND KEEP A HIGH PROPORTION OF THE COUNTRY'S RESOURCES TIED UP IN HEAVY INDUSTRY. A CLAIM OF LESSENING WAR DANGER HAS SERVED TO JUSTIFY A REDUCTION OF SOVIET DEFENSE EXPENDITURE AND MORE WILLINGNESS TO SLOW DOWN THE ARMAMENT RACE. VIEWED IN THIS LIGHT, USTINOV'S LATEST STATEMENT ABOUT THE WAR DANGER IS SUGGESTIVE OF FURTHER TILTING TOWARD HEAVY INDUSTRY AND LESS OPTIMISM ABOUT THE CHANCES FOR CUTTING DEFENSE OUTLAYS THAN WAS THE CASE JUST A FEW MONTHS AGO.

4. USTINOV ON MAY 9 CAUTIONED THAT "THE THREAT OF WAR, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 STATE 134333

ALTHOUGH PUSHED BACK, HAS NOT AS YET BEEN ELIMINATED," IN CONTRAST TO HIS FEBRUARY 23 ARTICLE IN WHICH HE HAD QUOTED BREZHNEV'S TULA LANGUAGE (JANUARY 18): "THE MAIN THING IS THAT THE DANGER OF A NEW GREAT WAR HAS BEEN PUSHED BACK." DEPUTY DEFENSE MINISTER (FOR ENGINEERING) ALEKSEYEV IN "SOCIALIST INDUSTRY" AND MAIN POLITICAL ADMINISTRATION CHIEF YEPISHEV IN "SOVIET RUSSIA" ECHOED USTINOV BY REFERRING TO "THE WAR THREAT ISSUING FROM IMPERIALISM." OTHERS DIFFERED:

(A)--FIRST DEPUTY DEFENSE MINISTER SOKOLOV, WRITING FOR TRUD, STUCK TO BREZHNEV'S OPTIMISTIC FORMULATION: "WE HAVE SUCCEEDED IN ... PUSHING BACK THE THREAT OF WORLD WAR." SOKOLOV THUS ACTED IN TUNE WITH BREZHNEV'S VERY RECENT MESSAGE TO THE WORLD ASSEMBLY OF LASTING-PEACE BUILDERS, WHICH STATED: "THE MAIN THING IS THAT WE HAVE SUCCEEDED IN PUSHING BACK THE THREAT OF WORLD WAR" (PRAVDA, MAY 7, 1977).

(B)--DEPUTY DEFENSE MINISTER (FOR AIR DEFENSE) BATITSKIY IN "RURAL LIFE" MILDLY CHARGED THAT "INFLUENTIAL FORCES" WERE "INTERESTED IN PREPARING A NEW WAR," AMENDING THE HAWKISH CHARGE THAT SUCH PREPARATIONS ARE IN FULL SWING. 5. STILL OTHERS AVOIDED THE MATTER, PERHAPS EAGER TO STAY NEUTRAL IN ANY CONTROVERSY OVER THE REGIME'S ECONOMIC AND DIPLOMATIC PRIORITIES.

6. DETENTE

7. EXISTENCE OF SUCH ARGUMENTS MAY HELP TO EXPLAIN SOME OF THE DISCORDANCE IN INDIVIDUAL SOVIET STATEMENTS ABOUT DETENTE DURING RECENT YEARS. THOSE SKEPTICAL OF THE BENEFITS FROM A MORE CONCILIATORY POLICY TOWARD THE WEST ARE LIKELY TO BE MORE RESERVED IN TREATING THE THEME, WHILE LESS INTRANSIGENT ELEMENTS MIGHT BE EXPECTED TO DO OTHERWISE. HERE AGAIN, USTINOV'S RHETORIC GREW SHRILLER LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 04 STATE 134333

AND WAS AT ODDS WITH THAT OF COLLEAGUES WHO REFUSED TO GO ALONG WITH HIS PESSIMISM ABOUT THE WAR DANGER.

8. USTINOV RAPPED "AGGRESSIVE IMPERIALISTIC FORCES" WHO WERE SEEKING TO HINDER DETENTE, BUT FAILED TO PRAISE DETENTE EXPLICITLY. IN FEBRUARY HE HAD NOTED "THE POSITIVE SHIFT IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS FROM 'COLD WAR' TO DETENTE." YEPISHEV FELL IN LINE WITH USTINOV HERE TOO, AS DID FIRST DEPUTY DEFENSE MINISTER (FOR WARSAW PACT FORCES) KULIKOV IN KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA. ALL THREE WERE WRITING ACCORDINGLY IN THE MILITANT SPIRIT OF THE MAJOR PRAVDA LEAD ARTICLE FOR MAY DAY WHICH IGNORED DETENTE AND APPROVED OF "FURTHER GROWTH OF THE USSR'S ECONOMIC AND DEFENSE MIGHT."

9. ON THE OTHER HAND, OGARKOV IN IZVESTIYA SALUTED "THE LENINIST POLICY OF STRUGGLE TO STRENGTHEN DETENTE" AND RECOGNIZED "POSITIVE SHIFTS" ON THAT FRONT. SOKOLOV, TOO, ACKNOWLEDGED SUCCESSES IN ATTAINING "A TURN FROM 'COLD WAR' TO DETENTE," AND THE SAME PHRASE WAS USED BY DEPUTY DEFENSE MINISTER (FOR INSPECTIONS) MOSKALENKO IN RED STAR. BATITSKIY WENT STILL FURTHER, HAILING THE "TURN TO DETENTE" AND REVIVING BREZHNEV'S SLOGAN ABOUT THE NEED TO MAKE DETENTE "IRREVERSIBLE." THAT SLOGAN WAS CONTROVERSIAL ENOUGH TO HAVE BEEN DROPPED FROM CPSU MAY DAY SLOGANS IN APRIL 1976. (UKRAINIAN BATITSKIY'S CAREER IS SUGGESTIVE OF PERSONAL TIES WITH KHRUSHCHEV AND BREZHNEV.) IN THE REPUBLIC-LEVEL PRESS, DEPUTY DEFENSE MINISTER (FOR AIR FORCES) KUTAKHOV ADMITTED THAT DETENTE WAS MARKED BY "COMPLEXITY" AND "CONTRADICTION," BUT HE DID SEE "REAL POSITIVE SHIFTS IN THE PLANET'S POLITICAL CLIMATE."

10. THE SOLIDARITY OF USTINOV AND YEPISHEV ON BOTH THE WAR DANGER AND DETENTE THEMES MIGHT HAVE BEEN CALCULATED TO GIVE AN IMAGE OF TOUGHNESS TO "CIVILIAN" LEADERS AT THE DEFENSE MINISTRY. BUT IT COULD JUST AS WELL HAVE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 05 STATE 134333

REFLECTED THE ASCENDANCE OF ELEMENTS WITHIN THE SOVIET RULING GROUP WHO ARE EVEN MORE CAUTIOUS ABOUT DETENTE-RELATED ISSUES THAN IS THE PROFESSIONAL MILITARY AS A WHOLE.

11. UNITED STATES

12. SINCE THE LATE MARSHAL GRECHKO CONDEMNED US ACTIONS IN INDOCHINA ON MAY 9, 1972, PRAVDA HAD NOT CARRIED A V-E DAY ARTICLE BY A DEFENSE MINISTRY OFFICIAL WHICH DIRECTLY CRITICIZED THE UNITED STATES. USTINOV'S DEPARTURE FROM THIS COURTEOUS POSTURE ON MAY 9, 1977, COULD BE REGARDED AS A NATURAL EXTENSION OF SOVIET POLEMICIZING FOLLOWING THE DEADLOCK OF SALT NEGOTIATIONS HELD AT MOSCOW IN MARCH. BUT THE FAILURE OF SIX OTHER MILITARY LEADERS TO ASSAIL THE UNITED STATES BY NAME, EVEN IN CONNECTION WITH THE SALT DEADLOCK, MAKES USTINOV'S CONDUCT APPEAR SOMEWHAT ANOMALOUS.

13. BOTH USTINOV AND OGARKOV WERE TOGETHER IN CRITICIZING "THE AMERICAN SIDE" AT THE MOSCOW SALT PARLEY. THEY ALLEGED THAT THE UNITED STATES HAD SOUGHT TO GAIN MILITARY ADVANTAGES AT THE EXPENSE OF SOVIET INTERESTS. OGARKOV, WHO TOOK A SWIPE AT "THE WHITE HOUSE'S NEW ADMINISTRATION," WENT FURTHER THAN USTINOV AND ATTACKED THE US POSITION ON "BACKFIRE" AND CRUISE MISSILES. HE RAISED, TOO, THE QUESTION OF US FORWARD BASE SYSTEMS.

14. LESS STRIDENT WAS YEPISHEV, WHO BLAMED "OPPONENTS OF DETENTE" FOR LACK OF PROGRESS AT SALT II. UNIQUELY, BATITSKIY PUT A SHINY GLOSS ON THE MOSCOW TALKS, SAYING ONLY THAT THEY "AGAIN AFFIRMED THE IMMUTABILITY OF THE CPSU'S AND OUR GOVERNMENT'S POLICY OF LIMITING THE ARMS RACE AND INSURING A LASTING PEACE ON EARTH." KULIKOV, SOKOLOV, MOSKALENKO, AND KUTAKHOV IGNORED THE SALT DEAD-

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PAGE 06 STATE 134333

LOCK; SOKOLOV AND KUTAKHOV MUTED THE WIDESPREAD CALL FOR

"STRENGTHENING" SOVIET DEFENSES, WITH THE AIR FORCE CHIEF  
AVERRING THAT USSR ARMED FORCES DISPOSED OF A SUFFICIENCY  
OF FIREPOWER.

15. VARIED MOODS

16. SOVIET MILITARY LEADERS' COMMENTARY FOR V-E DAY 1977  
APPEARS TO HAVE REFLECTED A DIVERSITY OF OPINION ON KEY  
POLICY ISSUES.

17. USTINOV'S POLITBURO STATUS AND PRAVDA ACCESS SUGGESTS  
THAT THE PREVAILING MOOD IN THE KREMLIN IS ONE OF RESENT-  
MENT AT THE EVOLUTION OF US POLICY TOWARD THE SOVIET

UNION. AN INFLUENTIAL MINORITY, HOWEVER, SEEMS TO CLING  
TO THE HOPE OF SOVIET-AMERICAN COOPERATION ON A FAIRLY  
BROAD BASIS AND THE CUTTING OF MOSCOW'S DEFENSE EXPENDI-  
TURE. ALTHOUGH BREZHNEV MAY BE LESS SANGUINE THAN HE  
ONCE WAS ABOUT THE PROSPECTS FOR DETENTE AND SALT, OUR  
READING SUGGESTS THAT HE IS STILL MORE LIKELY TO HAVE  
SYMPATHIZED WITH THE V-E DAY COMMENTATORS WHO REFUSED TO  
ADOPT A TOUGH LINE. VANCE

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